

# DEFINING THE CORE OF EMDR

Defining EMDR Therapy

## DEFINING EMDR THERAPY

- EMDR therapy is an evidence-based psychotherapy approach that treats the whole person and addresses the entire clinical picture of the client/patient.
- EMDR therapy is a multi-session psychotherapy which is based on a comprehensive treatment plan based on the Adaptive Information Processing (AIP) model of Francine Shapiro. This includes systematic targeting of pathogenic memory structures that cause and maintain clinical symptoms.

## DEFINING EMDR THERAPY

- The goal of EMDR therapy is to alleviate the symptoms and suffering of the client and help the client to heal.
- Another goal of EMDR therapy is to achieve significant improvement of interpersonal relationships, self-development and post-traumatic growth.
- This is achieved by incorporating the EMDR standard treatment protocol and EMDR-derived procedures/techniques as part of a personalised treatment plan. This plan uses the eight phases and the three-step approach of past, present and future areas that are in need of healing.

## DEFINING EMDR THERAPY

- There is a consensus that the term describing the way that the AIP system is activated should be referred to as 'Dual Attention Bilateral Stimulation' (DABLS).
- Dual attention bilateral stimulation leads to the reprocessing of the pathogenic memories through activating the self-healing system (AIP-system) in the client.
- EMDR therapy takes place in the context of a therapeutic alliance and mutually elaborated treatment goals.

## SPECIFIC EMDR TREATMENT STRATEGIES (FORMERLY REFERRED TO AS EMDR PROTOCOLS)

- Specific EMDR treatment strategies, in the literature often referred to as EMDR treatment protocols, are generic treatment plans and strategies for specific individuals, groups, or clinical situations that are consistent with the definition of the eight phase three pronged standard protocol.

## Specific EMDR treatment strategies (formerly referred to as EMDR Protocols)

- The goal of EMDR treatment strategies is the reprocessing of all aspects within the three-step approach of past, present and future that contribute to the client's presenting problems
- They can be used as a stand-alone treatment or as part of a more comprehensive psychotherapy.
- EMDR treatment strategies that contain more than a simple modification of the eight-phase, three-pronged standard protocol are considered experimental innovations until backed by research to support their efficacy.

## THE IMPORTANCE OF THE 8 PHASES

- The definition of the eight phases is maintained as defined by Francine Shapiro. However, it is important to emphasise that Phases 4 - 6 are all considered to be reprocessing phases. (Francine Shapiro, pages 136 & 141, 2018).

## PROCESSING AND REPROCESSING

- Processing is AIP in action, functioning well as it usually does in normal life.
- Reprocessing is the therapeutic activation of the AIP systems by means of EMDR therapy, consisting of Phases 4 to 6 of the standard protocol.



## GOAL OF PHASE 3

- Delineates and activates all of the various elements/ components of the targeted maladaptive memory network;
- Provides baseline data on cognitions, sensory information, emotion(s) and body sensations that are present before reprocessing to track changes over the course of reprocessing;
- Baseline measures include VoC and SUD ratings;
- Develops a PC, which is a potential linkage to the positive network

## GOAL OF REPROCESSING IN PHASE 4

- Transform the pathogenic memory into an adaptive memory
- SUD measures subjective disturbance of the memory. The goal is to reach a SUD of 0.
- However, the reprocessing of a target memory may not lead to a SUD 0. An example is an ecological emotion that does not reactivate arousal even if it can be disturbing.

## GOAL OF REPROCESSING IN PHASE 5

- After Phase 4 reprocessing continues. The PC represents a linkage to the adaptive networks. The goal is to establish more realistic perceptions and positive self-concepts/self-belief.
- VoC measures the subjective validity of the positive cognition on a scale from 1 to 7. The goal of Phase 5 is to reach a VoC of 7.

## GOAL OF PHASE 6

- After Phase 5 reprocessing continues with a focus on body sensations.
- The goal is to reprocess residual negative body sensations and strengthen positive ones

## EMDR-DERIVED PROCEDURES/TECHNIQUES

- EMDR-derived procedures/techniques use core elements of EMDR therapy and are used as either a stand-alone brief intervention or as part of EMDR therapy.
- These procedures/techniques can have one or more goals and may include:
  - Preparing for memory reprocessing by increasing stability.
  - Improving the client's capacity for emotional self-regulation.
  - Desensitizing a disturbing memory or part of a memory by reducing distress.
  - Strengthening memories of positive experiences.

## EMDR-DERIVED PROCEDURES/TECHNIQUES

- The procedures/techniques may also be used as part of a clinical assessment to evaluate client motivation, readiness and emotional capacity to respond to the demands of memory reprocessing.
- These EMDR procedures/techniques can be used in the field, in clinical sessions or be self-administered by the client.

On behalf of the EMDR Europe Standards Committee

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